

Working for the people and communities of the 32nd District



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- Chair, Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Trade Policy
- Capital Budget
- Community and Economic Development and Trade
- Select Committee on Environmental Health



Representative Maralyn Chase

Rep. Maralyn Chase and Gary Smith, the executive director of the Independent Business Association, testify in the Senate on ways to help small business.

2008 Session Report

Dear Neighbors,

The 2008 session is in full swing! I'm writing to tell you about some of the priorities I'm working on, with an emphasis on making health care more affordable and protecting our planet from threats such as global warming and pollution. I'll focus on other local priorities, such as education and the state budget, in my session wrap-up newsletter later this spring.

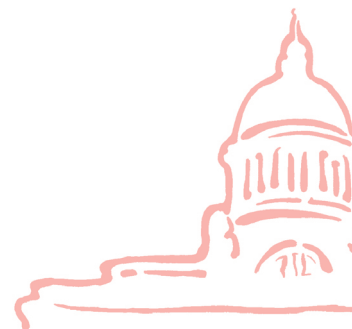
I am absolutely thrilled with our community's amazing response to the citizen survey I sent out just prior to the session. Long-time legislative observers say our survey had one of the highest rates of citizen responses they've ever seen! Thanks you! Your answers and comments are a huge help as I advocate for increased education funding, health care reform and other vital 32nd District concerns.

Please don't ever hesitate to share your thoughts about what our state government should be doing – or not doing – on the issues you care about. Being a good listener is one of the most important parts of my job, and your comments help me to be a stronger voice for our community.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of representing you and our community in the Legislature. Let's keep in touch!

Warmly,

Maralyn



Representative Maralyn Chase • 32nd District

Making peace with the earth

Sustainable development and consumption is the Golden Rule Between the Generations. We must create an ethic for the future if we are going to make peace with the earth. We know that the human species, our planet and civilization are mortal. Our "business-as-usual" approach to environmental issues and politics threatens to ruin us, and the only answer is to embrace new styles of development that sustain the planet and preserve biodiversity without halting growth. And it starts with each and every one of us.

Plastic and Styrofoam never decompose. All the plastic produced in the world is still with us. It does, however, break into ever smaller components and in doing so pollutes our land fills, food chain and oceans.

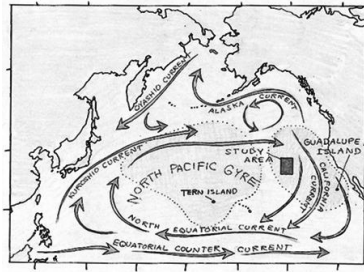
I have introduced several measures to build a carbon-free energy future and address dangerous threats to our environment posed by plastics, Styrofoam and pollution from small combustion-powered engines. I am also continuing my work to promote clean and renewable energy, including solar power and co-generation.



Mountains of ocean-carried plastics are not only ugly, they threaten irreversible damage to our food chain.
(Photo courtesy of Algalita Marine Research Foundation)

fuels without risking a dangerous elevation of the Earth's atmospheric temperature. I agree with experts who believe a fair carbon tax is the most cost-effective way to limit global warming emissions—a strategy that also provides price-predictability for energy producers of all kinds. Further, it avoids the problems found in other schemes, such as emissions-trading schemes or carbon auctions, which are open to manipulation by special interests who want to buy their way out of accountability for carbon pollution.

Importantly, money raised by a carbon tax could be used to offset other taxes that would help families and minimize damage to the economy. In my view, it makes more sense to tax carbon rather than workers.



Swirling ocean currents have created a garbage patch of non-biodegradable plastics and debris that is at least twice the size of the state of Texas. (Map courtesy of Algalita Marine Research Foundation)

A looming climate-change issue is the contest between two alternative ways to reduce fossil fuel pollution and the increasing levels of carbon in the air: cap-and-trade vs. a carbon tax. A carbon tax is the quickest way to reduce our use of high-carbon fuels. My proposal for a carbon tax (HB 2420) encourages businesses and individuals to factor the price of carbon into their decision-making rather than shift this cost to other consumers now and to yet unborn generations in the future.

The scientific consensus is clear: We cannot continue the unabated burning of fossil

Climate change and global warming

Washington is especially vulnerable to climate change because of our dependence on snow pack for summer stream flows and because the expected rise in sea levels threatens our coastal communities.

Extreme weather, a warming Pacific Northwest, reduced snow pack and rising sea levels are the four major ways that climate change is disrupting Washington's economy, environment and communities. And it will only get worse unless we act now.

Recent state laws to require stronger vehicle-emissions standards can help, but are only a start.



Washington is unlike other states. Thanks to our wealth of hydropower resources, power generation here results in lower greenhouse gas emissions than in other states. Instead, more than 45 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions are associated with transportation (cars, rail, trucks, planes, and ships). This means individuals can make a big difference in reducing our impact on global warming—and the impact of global warming on us!

Working for the people and co

2008 Session Report



Making health care affordable again

My December survey of local priorities and values showed beyond a doubt that health insurance is the number one concern of 32nd District residents—and for good reason. Even with the local economy doing well (congratulations to Boeing and its workers for a record year), *the number of persons without health coverage continues to climb.*

A major cause of the problem is the unnecessarily high health-insurance premiums charged to individuals and small employers by the big three insurance providers. Between them, they have amassed \$2.7 **billion** in reserves and surplus. Most experts agree that as much as \$1.4 billion of that amount could be refunded to policyholders and still leave more than enough to cover any realistic contingency.



That is why I introduced HB 1203. It would limit the surplus (assets beyond reserves) of large domestic health insurers to two months of claims. It would also require the current excess surplus to be refunded to consumers. In some cases, the refunds might amount to thousands of dollars for family coverage. They could be provided as future premium credits or cash, at the policyholder's option. The bill would also prevent excessive accumulations of surplus in future years.



This rational insurance-surplus legislation is a first step toward achieving affordable health coverage. Another option is to prohibit health-care providers from charging higher prices to people who pay cash for services. Believe it or not, folks

with high deductibles or no insurance coverage are typically charged much higher prices for *exactly* the same medical services as those who do have coverage. This practice is grossly unfair, hurts those who can least afford it, and should be stopped!

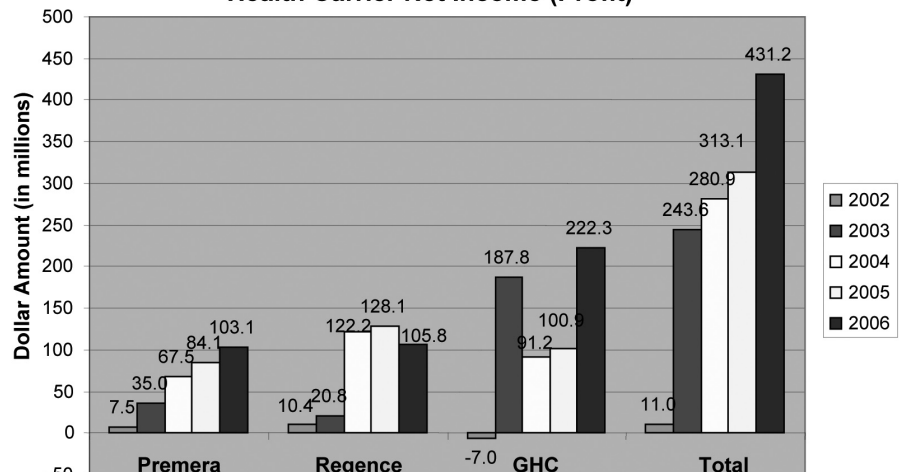
Undoubtedly, these ideas will be strenuously resisted by insurance lobbyists who are eager to protect the industry's profits. But clearly the general welfare of our community must come first, and these measures would go a long way towards making health care more affordable and more widely available to people across our district and our state.

Protecting the United States Constitution

Some citizens have asked why I have introduced a Joint Memorial of the Legislature requesting Congress to initiate articles of impeachment against President Bush and Vice President Cheney.

The answer is simple. As your Representative, at the beginning of each Session, I take an oath to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States of America and the State of Washington. This is a nation of laws, not of talking points, and we must be concerned with the precedents we would set by ignoring what appear to be clear violations of our Constitution. These men need to be brought before the bar of justice, investigated, tried, and if the evidence warrants it, convicted.

Health Carrier Net Income (Profit)



Health insurer incomes are soaring while families and businesses struggle to afford premium costs.

(Source: Northwest Federation of Community Organizations)

Representative Maralyn Chase • 32nd District

Shoreline Community College:

Governor's Best Practice Award Winner

Highlighting the value of cooperation, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board named Shoreline CC a winner of the 2007 Governor's Award for Best Practices in Workforce Development.

In a partnership with the Puget Sound Automobile Dealers Association, Shoreline Community College combined entry-level technical training with English language and basic skills programs to open automotive service careers to non-traditional populations, including immigrants, out-of-school and at-risk youth, dislocated workers, "first generation" students, veterans and disadvantaged adults.

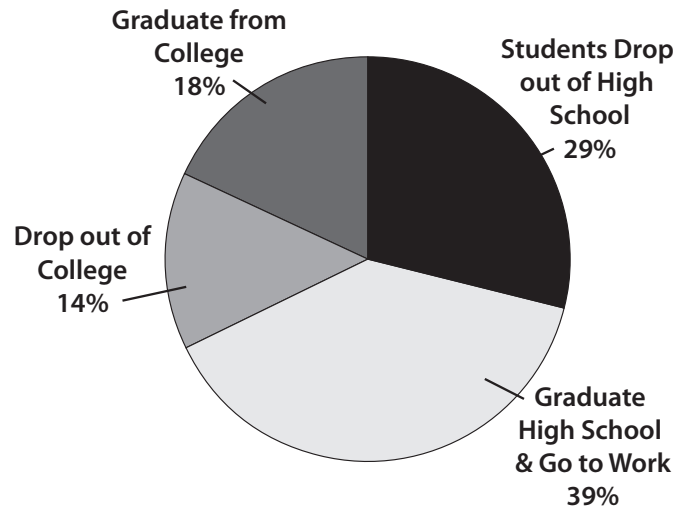
Shoreline Community College is an excellent example of pathways to success for the vast majority of students who choose workforce programs, apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training when they leave high school.

Education can be thought of as an investment, much like stocks and bonds. Individuals and the public make these investments, expecting an economic return in the form of higher wages and social benefits from the graduates.

The higher wages generate higher tax payments to government, providing a financial return that exceeds the government costs of providing education.

The Student Pipeline

Record of Washington State in its ability to get students from the ninth grade through college.



For every 100 Ninth Graders in Washington State High School...82% do not graduate from college.

Source: NCHEMS, Year 2000 data from "Making the Grade" Higher Education and the Global Challenge, page 30. 12/12/07 www.nored.us

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